

To whom it may concern,

It is with respect and concern that I enter this letter for testimony. I have been a public school teacher for 35 years and I cannot begin to describe the negative impact that has happened with the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system along with the Common Core. I fully support changes to these two areas. First I believe that the teacher evaluation system was applied to hastily and has not given educators a chance to bring themselves up to the very lofty, and in some cases, unobtainable standards that have been set. These standards have stifled the teaching process in favor of trying to meet them.

My major concern is with the implementation of Common Core. This has become the basis to the evaluation, yet we were never given time or the proper training to fully implement them to the extent that has been asked. I am a music educator and there is not a Common Core for music and instead I'm expected to somehow make it fit my subject area. I feel like we are trying to force a square peg into a round hole. It just doesn't fit. Furthermore, this implementation is completely choking the fine arts. We do not work in the same manner as Language Arts, Math, Science, and History. Yet I'm expected to take on the characteristics of this teaching in my day to day classroom. If you were to put the shoe on the other foot it would be like asking the language arts teacher to have the students pull an instrument out of their case and begin to teach them how to play. They may muddle through it some, but do they have the expertise? Certainly not, nor do I have the expertise to teach language arts appropriately. Yet this is what is asked of me and becomes the basis of my evaluation.

I ask that you reconsider the requirements for the teacher evaluation system and furthermore implore you to freeze the implementation of Common Core until more training can take place and until it has been fully developed for all subject areas. Or at least leave room for its exclusion in the fine arts. It is seriously impacting the life of fine arts in public schools and must be addressed. I think much more discussion needs to happen to decide if Common Core is in fact the best thing for our students. I, for one, think it is not and hope that you will eliminate this requirement from public schools in Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration,

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